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ABSTRACT

The National Institute of Education (NIE), a new federal agency established in August 1972 within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, occupies a parallel position to the Office of Education. The Administration and the Congress believe that a sustained, systematic investment in research, development, testing, and diffusion will substantially improve education. The NIE aims at solving or alleviating American educational problems, advancing the practice of education, strengthening the scientific and technological foundations of education, and building an effective educational research and development system. The unevenness of research-based educational development will be stabilized, and failure factors minimized, by a task force on career education, which is responsible for monitoring existing programs and planning new ones. The NIE will focus on reducing youth unemployment and helping adults redirect their career patterns. Major NIE efforts are on four model programs intended to develop career exploration and awareness: (1) the school-based model, (2) the employer-based model, (3) the home-based model, and (4) the rural residential model. Future emphasis will be placed on quality evaluation of career education products, post-secondary education, financing career education, integration of services and curriculums, labor market research, and greater partnership between employers and the education system. (AG)

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CAREER EDUCATION
AND
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

by

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Speech Given Before

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I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE TODAY TO DISCUSS THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION AND OUR CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM. NIE IS A NEW AGENCY WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED BY LAW IN THE MIDDLE OF LAST YEAR, AND WHICH CAME INTO BEING OFFICIALLY ON THE FIRST OF AUGUST, 1972. AS SPELLED OUT BY THE CONGRESS, NIE HAS FOUR MAJOR OBJECTIVES:

TO HELP TO SOLVE OR ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEMS OF, AND ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF AMERICAN EDUCATION;

TO ADVANCE THE PRACTICE OF EDUCATION AS AN ART, SCIENCE, AND PROFESSION;

TO STRENGTHEN THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION; AND

TO BUILD AN EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

THE INSTITUTE IS A PART OF THE EDUCATION DIVISION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, AND OCCUPIES A PARALLEL POSITION TO THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION. THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION AND THE DIRECTOR OF NIE REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF HEW THROUGH THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, DR. MARLAND.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NIE REPRESENTS A BELIEF ON THE PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE CONGRESS THAT A SUSTAINED, SYSTEMATIC INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT,

TESTING, AND PUBLICIZING EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES WILL HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL PAYOFF IN TERMS OF IMPROVED EDUCATION. THE WORDS IN THAT SENTENCE HAVE AN IMPORTANT MEANING. FIRST, I WOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THIS IS A BELIEF; OUR EXPERIENCES IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, WHILE NOT ALL BLEAK, HAVE NOT BEEN OUTSTANDING. THERE ARE, FOR EXAMPLE, FEW CONSPICUOUS SUCCESSES IN THE AREAS OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION. LITTLE INDICATION THAT RESEARCH ON TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS HAS IMPROVED THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS OR THEIR PERFORMANCE IN THE CLASSROOM. THIS IS WHERE THE INSTITUTE MUST PROVE ITSELF. AND UNTIL IT DOES, IT IS PROPER FOR YOU AND OTHERS IN THIS SOCIETY TO REMAIN SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE VALUE OF WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH.

SECOND, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT SUSTAINED ACTIVITIES. PART OF THE PROBLEM WITH PAST RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT MAY HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY ITS INSTABILITY AND UNEVENESS. FADS WERE SUPPORTED FOR SHORT PERIODS OF TIME AND THEN ABANDONED; PROJECTS WERE STARTED BUT NOT FULLY DEVELOPED; AND, FREQUENTLY, PROGRAMS WERE NOT EVALUATED. MANY RESEARCH ACTIVITIES WERE BEGUN WITH LITTLE OR NO PLANNING, AND AS A CONSEQUENCE, WERE EITHER ILL-CONCEIVED OR ILL-APPLIED. THE INSTITUTE HOPES TO BRING A MEASURE OF STABILITY AND SUSTAINED SUPPORT TO CAREER EDUCATION AND THE OTHER AREAS CHOSEN FOR RESEARCH INVESTMENT.

THIRD, THE TERM "SYSTEMATIC" IMPLIES THE NEED TO THINK A PROBLEM THROUGH BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO DEAL WITH IT; THE NEED TO DECIDE UPON THE STRATEGIES; AND TECHNIQUES TO BE USED, INCLUDING THE TYPE OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS BEST ABLE TO CARRY OUT THESE ACTIVITIES; AND FINALLY, THE NEED TO KNOW HOW THE RESULTS CAN BE USED. ISOLATED DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS, WHICH HAVE SO FREQUENTLY BEEN PART OF OUR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT HISTORY IN THE SOCIAL PROGRAM AREAS, DO NOT SEEM TO BE AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO DEVELOP NEW PROGRAM CONCEPTS.

FINALLY, THE INSTITUTE IS GOING TO BE CONCERNED WITH THE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND TESTING OF IDEAS AND THE PUBLICIZING OR DISSEMINATION OF THOSE IDEAS. WE WILL NOT BE PRIMARILY A BASIC RESEARCH OPERATION, CONCERNED ONLY WITH "UNIVERSITY BASED" RESEARCH. WE WILL NOT BE SOLELY CONCERNED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PRODUCTS AND SPECIALIZED FACILITIES.

WE ARE INTERESTED IN THE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT BOTH SPECIALISTS AND SKILLED PRACTITIONERS CAN PROVIDE IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. WE BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT WE MUST PROVIDE SOME EVIDENCE OF THE WORTH OF THE PROGRAMS THAT WE DEVELOP OR THAT OTHERS HAVE DEVELOPED. EVALUATION AND TESTING WILL BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR MISSION. TOO OFTEN RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND EVALUATION PRODUCTS SIT ON A SHELF GATHERING DUST, SO WE MUST BE VERY CONCERNED THAT THE INFORMATION WE PRODUCE REACHES THE PRACTITIONER IN A USABLE FORM.

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When the National Institute of Education was initiated, it inherited a large number of programs from the research component of the Office of Education. A substantial part of this inheritance were the Career Education activities begun over the last two years. Within the Institute we have created a task force on Career Education. It has the responsibility for monitoring and directing the existing programs as well as planning new ones. This task force has been working these past months to understand the purpose and direction of the existing work, the needs of the field, and the places where NIE can best make a contribution.

Career Education, of course, is a tremendously broad concept that can cover an enormous number of things within the realm of education. To give our development efforts some sense of focus, we have defined Career Education within the Institute as providing individuals with knowledge, capabilities, and attitudes necessary to successfully interact with the economic sector. We are thus concerned with helping people enter the labor market with the most effective skills and capabilities possible and progress within the labor market in a satisfying and financially rewarding way. Beyond that, we will focus on a couple of very important areas.

The first, which concerns youths, is presently the major focus of our programs. By youths, we mean roughly those from 12 to 25. This age group is noteworthy for its

HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, SEARCH FOR CAREER DIRECTION, INITIAL CONTACTS WITH THE ECONOMIC SECTOR, AND FOR SWITCHING FROM DEPENDENCY ON THE FAMILY AND SCHOOL TO INDEPENDENCE IN SOCIETY AND THE JOB MARKET--IN SHORT, IT IS A CRUCIAL TIME PERIOD IN THE LIFE OF ANY INDIVIDUAL. THERE HAVE BEEN RAPID CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF THIS AGE GROUP OVER THE PAST DECADES. INCREASING PERCENTAGES OF OUR YOUTHS ARE COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL; THUS CREDENTIALS THAT WERE RARE FOUR OR FIVE DECADES AGO ARE COMMON TODAY, WHILE EVER LARGER PROPORTIONS OF THE POPULATION ARE SEEKING SOME FORM OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION. YET WE STILL HAVE VERY LARGE UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES, FIGURES THAT WOULD BE EVEN LARGER IF OUR STATISTICS REFLECTED THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE SIMPLY DROPPED OUT OF THE SYSTEM AND CHOOSE NOT EVEN TO SEEK WORK. NOT ONLY ARE THOSE FIGURES LARGE IN GENERAL, THEY ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY LARGE FOR MINORITIES. CLEARLY THEN, THE BROAD PROBLEM OF TRYING TO HELP PEOPLE THIS AGE BECOME ECONOMICALLY SUCCESSFUL IS CRUCIAL. YET IT IS NOT BEING DEALT WITH SATISFACTORILY, PARTICULARLY FOR MINORITY YOUTHS.

OUR SECOND AREA OF GREAT CONCERN INVOLVES INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR PRIME WORKING AGE WHO FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE CAREER PATTERNS. THIS MAY BE A HOUSEWIFE WHO WANTS TO RE-ENTER THE LABOR MARKET OR AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS BECOME MIRED IN ONE CAREER PATTERN, FEELS HIMSELF AT A DEAD-END, AND SEEKS SOMETHING QUITE NEW AND DIFFERENT.

OUR SYSTEM IS NOT WELL EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH THESE INDIVIDUALS. TAKEN AS A WHOLE, THE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, WHILE PROVIDING SOME OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP CROSS-OVER SKILLS, IS STILL LARGELY FOCUSED ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE TRADITIONAL COLLEGE STUDENT. THE LABOR MARKET, DEPENDENT UPON CREDENTIALS, DOES NOT PROVIDE REWARDS FOR SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES GAINED THROUGH JOB EXPERIENCE, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ARE IN AREAS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE NEW CAREER OPPORTUNITY.

THESE TWO GROUPS, THEN, SEEM TO DESERVE SIGNIFICANT ATTENTION ON THE PART OF POLICY MAKERS AND RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PERSONNEL.

THE MAJOR FOCUS OF CURRENT NIE EFFORTS ARE ON FOUR MODEL PROGRAMS INTENDED TO DEVELOP AND DEMONSTRATE INSTITUTIONAL WAYS TO PROVIDE CAREER EDUCATION. THE FIRST, THE SCHOOL-BASED MODEL, INVOLVES DEVELOPING ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY CURRICULAR MATERIALS. IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES THESE MATERIALS EMPHASIZE AWARENESS OF VARIOUS CAREER OPPORTUNITIES; IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES, THEY EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES IN MANY CAREER AREAS; IN HIGH SCHOOL, THEY PROVIDE SPECIFIC PREPARATION FOR CAREER OPPORTUNITIES. THESE CURRICULUM MODULES ARE BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THEY CAN BE INFUSED INTO EXISTING SCHOOL PROGRAMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WITHOUT REQUIRING RADICAL SHIFTS IN THEIR ORGANIZATION.

THE SECOND CAREER EDUCATION MODEL IS AN EMPLOYER-BASED PROGRAM. BEING CONDUCTED BY FOUR REGIONAL LABS AND SEVERAL EMPLOYER CONSORTIA, THIS MODEL IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE ACTUAL PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT. THE UNDERLYING HYPOTHESES OF THIS PROGRAM ARE THE BELIEFS THAT THE CURRENT PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE IRRELEVANT OR VIEWED AS IRRELEVANT BY MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, THAT RELEVANT LEARNING FOR MANY ADOLESCENTS MUST BE EXPERIENTIAL, AND THAT EMPLOYERS ARE CAPABLE OF PROVIDING SUCH EXPERIENCES, GIVEN THE PROPER INCENTIVES.

THESE ACTIVITIES MUST BE VIEWED AS PILOT TESTS OR TRIALS. WE ARE EXPERIMENTING WITH NEW ORGANIZATIONAL MECHANISMS. WE ARE SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND WHERE THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR SUCH EDUCATION CAN BE OBTAINED. WE ARE CONSIDERING HOW THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED, AND WHAT ACCEPTABILITY THIS KIND OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE WILL RECEIVE FROM STUDENTS AND POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS.

THE THIRD MAJOR ACTIVITY IS THE HOME-BASED MODEL. HERE WE ARE SEEKING WAYS TO DELIVER CAREER EDUCATION SERVICES TO PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OR IN JOB ENVIRONMENTS WHERE CAREER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE. THE FIRST TEST IS UNDER WAY IN RHODE ISLAND. UNLIKE THE OTHER MODELS, IT DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO TEACH SKILLS AND ATTITUDES DIRECTLY. RATHER, THE PROJECT IS DESIGNED

PRIMARILY TO INFORM INDIVIDUALS ABOUT WORK AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES THAT ALREADY EXIST WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. IT ALSO USES MASS COMMUNICATION MEDIA TO ASSESS THE CAREER INTERESTS OF SELECTED HOME-BASED POPULATIONS. THE PROJECT ASSUMES THAT THERE ARE A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF ADULTS WHO ARE NOT STUDENTS OR EMPLOYED, WHO ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING IMPROVED EMPLOYMENT, OR WHO ARE OTHERWISE UNSATISFIED WITH THEIR PRESENT SITUATION AND NEED CAREER ASSISTANCE. ALSO, IT IS ASSUMED THAT A RICH VARIETY OF CAREER TRAINING RESOURCES ALREADY EXIST AND THAT THE PRIMARY CAREER-RELATED PROBLEMS OF THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE INSUFFICIENT GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION CONCERNING THESE RESOURCES' EXISTENCE. IN REALITY THEN, THE HOME-BASED MODEL COMES CLOSE TO THE UNIFIED SOCIAL SERVICES CONCEPT THAT FORMER SECRETARY RICHARDSON HAS BEEN ADVOCATING. IT REPRESENTS A BELIEF THAT OUR PROBLEMS ARE NOT SO MUCH THE ABSENCE OF GOOD SERVICES AS OUR INABILITY TO INTEGRATE AND USE THEM TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR POPULATION.

THE FINAL MODEL IS DEVELOPING RESIDENTIAL TRAINING AND COUNSELING FOCUSED ON ENTIRE RURAL FAMILIES, RATHER THAN SINGLE INDIVIDUALS. THIS MODEL ASSUMES THAT FORMAL SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS ALONE ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY POWERFUL TO HELP POOR FAMILIES. IT ALSO ASSUMES THAT THE PROBLEMS OF MANY FAMILIES GO BEYOND THE LACK OF SPECIFIC JOB SKILLS FOR AN

ADULT MEMBER TO INCLUDE THE LACK OF HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT SKILLS, HEALTH AND NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE, CHILD CARE SKILLS, AND SO ON. FINALLY, IT ASSUMES THAT THESE FAMILIES CAN BE BEST HELPED BY MOVING THEM FOR A PERIOD OF TIME FROM THEIR PRESENT ENVIRONMENT INTO A CONTROLLED RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT. THE PRIMARY PROBLEM WITH THIS SORT OF PROGRAM IS ITS GREAT EXPENSE, BUT IF IT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVES THE WELL-BEING OF THESE FAMILIES, IT MAY ULTIMATELY TURN OUT TO BE A COST EFFECTIVE VENTURE.

THESE PROGRAMS REPRESENT THE BULK OF OUR FINANCIAL INVESTMENT, BUT BY NO MEANS DO THEY REPRESENT THE BULK OF THE NATION'S INVESTMENT IN CAREER EDUCATION OR CURRICULAR MATERIALS. FOR THIS REASON, THE INSTITUTE PROPOSES TO PULL TOGETHER THE WEALTH OF MATERIALS CREATED ACROSS THE COUNTRY, DESCRIBE THEM, AND MAKE THOSE DESCRIPTIONS AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED INSTITUTIONS AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS. WE ARE EXPLORING WAYS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY OF THESE PRODUCTS. IT IS CLEAR THAT WE CANNOT EVALUATE ALL OF THEM, BUT IT SEEMS IMPORTANT THAT WE BE CONCERNED WITH THE PROBLEM OF QUALITY CONTROL.

AS WE CONSIDER THE EXPANSION AND CONTINUATION OF OUR PROGRAM OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, WE EXPECT TO PLACE SOMEWHAT GREATER EMPHASIS ON THE POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL AREA.

WE WILL BEGIN THIS PROCESS, I THINK, BY CARRYING OUT ANALYSES ON THE OPPORTUNITIES TO SWITCH CAREERS, THE INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS TO THESE CHANGES, AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH CURRENT INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE EMERGING OPEN UNIVERSITIES ARE PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THESE CAREER CHANGES.

PARTICULAR EMPHASIS MUST BE PLACED ON THE PROBLEMS OF FINANCING THIS TYPE OF CAREER EDUCATION ACTIVITY. TO WHAT EXTENT SHOULD THE PUBLIC BEAR THESE COSTS AND TO WHAT EXTENT SHOULD INDIVIDUALS BEAR THESE COSTS?

IN BOTH THE YOUTH AND ADULT AREAS WE WANT TO SPEND CONSIDERABLE TIME AND EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT OF CAREER EDUCATION. THE BEST EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE WORLD CANNOT ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF CAREER EDUCATION IF THE LABOR MARKET LACKS CAREER LADDERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINED ADVANCEMENT; IF THERE IS DISCRIMINATION IN THE MANNER IN WHICH THE ENTRY LEVEL JOBS ARE FILLED; OR IN THE WAY CAREER PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES ARE PROVIDED.

I THINK, THEREFORE, THAT THE INSTITUTE MUST ASSESS AND PERHAPS EXTEND RESEARCH ON THE BEHAVIOR OF THE LABOR MARKET, PARTICULARLY AS IT AFFECTS YOUTHS. WE MUST LOOK AT WHY SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE A CONTINUING CAREER PROGRESSION AND OTHERS BECOME QUICKLY MIRED IN DEAD-END JOBS. WE MUST

EXAMINE ALSO THE WAY IN WHICH CREDENTIALS ARE USED IN OUR SOCIETY. THIS IS NOT A BARREN FIELD. THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY HAVE SUPPORTED SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH THAT NEEDS TO BE APPLIED TO CAREER EDUCATION STRATEGIES. SUCH RESEARCH IS LIKELY TO SUGGEST THAT WE NEED TO SEEK A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, ONE IN WHICH BOTH MAKE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE WAY THEY CARRY OUT THEIR AFFAIRS. THIS MUST BE DONE IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF CAREER EDUCATION.

IN CONCLUSION, THEN, LET ME TRY TO STATE THE ASPIRATIONS I HAVE FOR THE CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. I HOPE THAT WE CAN DEVELOP A CLEARER IDENTIFICATION AND DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH INHIBIT SUCCESSFUL ACCESS TO AND PERFORMANCE IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR BY IMPORTANT SEGMENTS OF THE NATION'S POPULATION. IN THIS PROCESS, WE MUST CONSIDER BOTH INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS LACK OF SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND ATTITUDES AND THE PROBLEMS INHERENT IN OUR LABOR MARKET; RIGIDITIES, DISCRIMINATION, AND IRRELEVANT CREDENTIALISM. WE MUST ALSO SEEK TO IDENTIFY STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS AND WHERE NECESSARY, CREATE PROGRAM MODELS TO CARRY OUT THOSE STRATEGIES. IN THE LONG RUN THIS MAY REQUIRE A RARELY ACHIEVED PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE EMPLOYER AND THE SCHOOL SYSTEM.

FINALLY, WE MUST SEEK TO INVOLVE A WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS AND COMPETENCIES IN THIS EFFORT. THIS WIDE-SPREAD INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE SUCH AS YOURSELVES IS IMPORTANT, BOTH TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS PERCEIVED AND EXPERIENCED BY DIFFERENT PARTS OF SOCIETY AND TO OUR ACCOMPLISHING THIS REFORM. TO DO THIS, BOTH EMPLOYERS AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL MUST PARTICIPATE IN AND UNDERSTAND OUR FINDINGS AND PROGRAM DESIGNS.